IN THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Claims 1-2 (Cancelled).

3.   (Previously Presented) A method of resolving label contention in a label switched network comprising:

(i) receiving a first label switched path setup message sent by a first node in the network;

(ii) determining whether the first label switched path setup message contends for a same label assigned or suggested in a second label switched path setup message sent by a second node in the network;

(iii) giving priority to the second label switched path setup message if the first label switched path setup message is a label request and if the second label switched path setup message is a label reply;

(iv) giving priority to the second label switched path setup message if the first label switched path setup message is a setup message for a unidirectional label switched path and if the second label switched path setup message is a setup message for a bidirectional label switched path; and

(v) giving priority in accordance with a first contention policy if both the first and second label switched path setup messages are setup messages for unidirectional label switched paths and in accordance with a second contention policy, different from the first contention policy, if both the first and second label switched path setup messages are setup messages for bidirectional label switched paths.

4.   (Original) The method of claim 3 wherein the first contention policy gives priority in accordance with downstream label selection.

5.   (Original) The method of claim 4 wherein the second contention policy gives priority to the node with a higher node identification.

Claims 6-7 (Cancelled).

8.   (Previously Presented) A method of resolving label contention in a label switched network comprising:

(i) receiving a first label switched path setup message sent by a first node in the network;

(ii) determining whether the first label switched path setup message contends for a same label assigned or suggested in a second label switched path setup message sent by a second node in the network;

(iii) giving priority to the second label switched path setup message if the first label switched path setup message is a setup message for a unidirectional label switched path and if the second label switched path setup message is a setup message for a bidirectional label switched path; and

(iv) giving priority in accordance with a first contention policy if both the first and second label switched path setup messages are setup messages for unidirectional label switched paths and in accordance with a second contention policy, different from the first contention policy, if both the first and second label switched path setup messages are setup messages for bidirectional label switched paths.

9.   (Original) The method of claim 8 wherein the first contention policy gives priority in accordance with downstream label selection.

10.   (Original) The method of claim 9 wherein the second contention policy gives priority to the node with a higher node identification.

Claims 11-14 (Cancelled).